

Camp Meeting History

A Methodist Preacher Sanctified

Rev. John S. Inskip was deeply opposed to his wife's pursuit and end enjoyment of the grace of entire sanctification. "Greatly afflicted and mortified," he returned from the Sing-Sing Campmeeting to his Brooklyn pulpit only to find that Mrs. Inskip's testimony found approbation among leaders of his congregation. One "expressed the conviction that it was what the whole church not only needed, but should seek at once." This spurred Inskip to call upon God for greater measures of the Spirit in order that "he might the more successfully lead souls to God." "He felt the need of 'more religion,' a deeper work of grace, and a 'baptism of the Spirit.' But the idea of entire sanctification had become repulsive to him.

Subjectively biased against the experience of heart holiness he sought to by-pass that phrasing of it and achieve the end of a holy, fruitful life without the means which "holiness preachers" held before him for its realization.

The crisis came on Sunday morning, August 28, 1846. Much against his own feelings he was "led to preach" from Hebrews, chapter twelve, verse one. With much liberty and pointed appeals, from the pulpit.

"He urged upon his people the duty and importance of immediate and decisive action. The culminating point was reached and in the most vehement manner he explained, 'Brethren, lay aside every weight! Do it now. You can do it now, and therefore should do it. It is your duty at this moment to make a consecration of your all to God, and declare your will henceforth to be wholly and forever the Lord's!' He . . . emphasized it with increasing earnestness. 'Let us now lay aside every weight,' he said, 'and the sin which doth so easily beset us.' . . . and as he continued to urge the admonition, a voice within said, 'Do it yourself.' He paused a moment, and the admonition was repeated. 'Do it yourself, and do it now.' Must he turn away from his own teaching, and urge others to do what he would not do himself? He could, consistently, do nothing else but obey . . . He was not long in deciding what course to pursue. In the same earnest manner he said: 'Come, brethren, follow your pastor. I call Heaven and earth to witness that I now declare I will be henceforth wholly and forever the Lord's.' Having gone so far as to give himself to God in an 'everlasting covenant,' his faith gathered strength, 'I am wholly and forever thine!' . . . The bliss, the peace, the triumph of that hour, he never lost sight of. It was to him a new life."

That evening brought an answer to his prayer for greater effectiveness in soul-winning. Twenty came to his altar seeking salvation the first day he began preaching Christ as "present sanctifier," a day which marked the beginning of a revival at South Third Street Methodist Episcopal Church, Brooklyn.

"The revival continued until more than three hundred were converted, and a large number fully sanctified, and a special meeting for the promotion of holiness established and held weekly in the parsonage."

Two weeks after becoming "wholly and forever the Lord's," Inskip attended for the first time (according to this investigator's findings) the "Tuesday Meeting" at the Palmers, and immediately engaged them for holiness meetings in his church.

Convinced that the sanctification of the church meant the salvation of the world, he soon came to believe that God was calling him to a special task of spreading Scriptural holiness. Anticipating opposition to his purpose to tell "at all times and everywhere" of "salvation complete and full," he determined to be firm and fearless, without being controversial or caustic, in his preaching. Feeling

that Methodism had declined in spirituality and power, Inskip was convinced that a revival of the doctrinal preaching of "Christian holiness" was the key to the success of the gospel. He was encouraged by the fact that the doctrine was attracting attention in the mid-sixties among many Methodist preachers.

By the middle of the year 1866 (one year before the Vineland camp), it had become clear to him that he must further as never before one thing. Without knowing his future work, he recorded in his diary his firm resolve: "It is my purpose to devote the remainder of my short life to the all-important work of spreading scriptural holiness among men." He then devoted himself to a careful study of the doctrine of "full salvation." In the light of the thought and practice of his times he was convinced that three things were of utmost importance in promoting this doctrine.

"First, it is needful to show that the work is in addition to regeneration; secondly, that it must be obtained by faith, and thirdly, when obtained, it should be acknowledged. These points should therefore be frequently and earnestly pressed."

While serving as pastor and seeing scores of professed conversions and sanctifications, Inskip's influence continued to widen. Dr. L. R. Dunn, a leading Methodist pastor of Newark, New Jersey, and Mrs. Amanda Smith, later a "world-renowned evangelist," were among two of the influential persons won to a holiness ministry through Inskip's labors.

The bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1864, had declared that "A gracious revival of religion, deep, pervading, and permanent, is the great demand of the times." They had addressed the General Conference with fervent entreaty to the ministry, to turn their most thoughtful and prayerful attention to meet that demand. Inskip's inner spiritual urges were now decidedly turned in that direction. He with others felt that the initiating of the "National Camp meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness" at Vineland was with that end in view.

In the summer of 1868, the second National Holiness Camp Meeting was held at Manheim, Pennsylvania, in the very heart of the religious activities of the Evangelical Association, a Methodistic body, organized by Jacob Albright about 1800, to reach the German-speaking peoples of America with the gospel. One observer wrote thus:

"Representative men and women were there from nearly every state in the Union . . . The Sabbath was a great day. Not less than twenty-five thousand persons were on the ground, including three hundred ministers. Bishop Simpson was present, and preached . . . Mr. Inskip preached in the afternoon on Christian perfection . . . and greatly moved the vast crowds . . . scores were reported as having been converted or sanctified. One called Manheim Camp "a little Pentecost," and when asked for the reason he said " . . . he had come from a testimony meeting, where Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed, Congregationalists and Quakers had spoken of the work of God in their hearts, and from the testimony given, he was utterly unable to distinguish the one denomination from the other. This was Pentecost."

After the Vineland and Manheim Camps, which had been initiated and arranged for by the "National Camp Meeting Association," all other camps for many years were held at the invitations and under the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on grounds dedicated for such religious services. In sixteen different states in sixteen years, fifty-two national camps had been held, with as many more invitations declined.

After having served thirty-five years as a pastor, most of that time in metropolitan centers—Philadelphia, Cincinnati

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